

**VERMONT MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT
PLANNING COUNCIL
Minutes**

**June 19, 2020
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Virtual Meeting on Skype**

Members in Attendance: Stephanie Beck, Dan Towle, Alice Maynard, Sandi Yandow, Cinn Smith, Laurie Emerson, Michael McAdoo, Erhard Mahnke, Michael Hartman, Anne Rich

DMH Staff in Attendance: Jessica Bernard, Christina Thompson

Convene Meeting, Introductions:

- Meeting convened at 1:07 PM
- Made introductions, reviewed agenda
- Laurie asked how many members are needed to form a quorum.
 - Jessica responded that 1/3 of the group are needed. There are eight members present today which is enough to form a quorum.
- Dan asked a point of order:
 - Is Marla still the Chair and who is the designated Vice Chair
 - Members responded that Marla is the Chair and Cindy Tabor is Vice Chair. Neither are present today. The group decided they are comfortable with Jessica facilitating the meeting today and they will address a new Vice Chair at the June meeting.
- Additional items: Dan asked for an update about DMH funds at the legislature. Jessica clarified that there is no new budget information until the legislature passes the current budget.

Review May 2020 Meeting Minutes:

- Michael McAdoo was present for the May meeting, which was not captured in May minutes. Jessica will add to the minutes that Michael M. was present for the May meeting.
- Laurie moved to accept the May meeting minutes. Alice seconded the motion. Dan was not present at the May meeting and is abstaining. Vote unanimous to approve May meeting minutes.

DMH Updates:

- Jessica provided the following DMH updates:
 - The legislature has not passed the 2021 budget yet. DMH is anticipating a skinny budget with cuts.
 - DMH and ADAP have been awarded a SAMHSA grant for \$2 million to put money into the emergency services system. This funding will go to DAs and SSAs. Money is going to the Pathways warm line along with funding for a new van to transport clients. Funds will be allotted for new technology and tools for Emergency Services (ES) staff in the field— iPads, tablets, sensory bags, etc. Sensory bags are another way to help deescalate a person who may benefit from a tactile experience or different way to connect with people.

- DMH applied for a Suicide Prevention grant for \$800,000. Alison Krompf and Jessica Bernard worked on and submitted the grant application but have not yet heard if DMH will be awarded the grant. There has not been an increase in suicide rates in Vermont since COVID-19; however, DMH wants to be prepared and continue to do prevention.
 - Dan noted there has been a significant increase in the use of the Vermont warm line over the past two months.
- Jessica is hoping we will hear more from the legislature by July about the State budget.
- Erhard provided the following updates:
 - COVID-19 Relief House Bill H.965 is being considered in the Senate this afternoon. This is a combo bill of the House Healthcare Committee and Human Services Committee – \$200,000 for Pathways to continue the 24/7 support line. Legislature will adjourn next Friday. \$400 million that was reserved by the House and Senate is not going to be reserved anymore. Tier Two Funds may be allocated instead to put towards bailout. The Senate Healthcare Committee is meeting again on Monday to discuss bill H.965.
 - The state provided eviction prevention statewide and relief for 2000 people who were homeless to live in hotels. Bill H.966 is on the way to the Senate which would allocate \$32 million to the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) to help pay back rent for those who are experiencing a financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Nine million dollars has been allocated to do renovations to shelters to comply with social distance regulations. Shelters need to be updated for the influx of people who will be leaving hotels to enter shelters. Pathways put in a proposal to go statewide and serve about 200 people with housing first services, but there is an issue that COVID-19 relief funds needing to be used by Dec. 30.
- Stephanie provided an update that DMH and the Department of Health issued a joint press release about receiving the SAMHSA grant for mental health and substance use.
- Acknowledging Juneteenth – June 19, 1865 marks the end of enslavement of African Americans in the United States. Jessica encouraged everyone to read about the history of Juneteenth and to think about how systemic racism is still a prevalent issue today. DMH is doing work to examine white privilege, racial inequity, and the impact of systemic racism and how we can do better in the mental health system of care.
- June is Pride Month. Commissioner Squirrel and DMH staff are committed to paying attention to LGBTQ+ issues. Alice noted that the Supreme Court recently declared that the civil rights law protects LGBTQ+ people in the workplace and they cannot be fired based on their identity.

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PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD 15 MINUTE BREAK (1:50-2:00pm)

- There were no members of the public in attendance and the group decided to skip the break.

2019 Budget Update:

- The planning council reviewed the 2019 budget underspent goals

- Goal 6 - SharePoint license for Clara Martin Center (CMC) to manage coordinated entry for housing programs. Underspent by \$15,834.
- Goal 7 – Washington County would like to create a street outreach position to be embedded within the police department. Someone who may have had a mental health condition in Washington County was holding a pellet gun and was shot by the police. Looking to have a liaison with the police to help deescalate situations and offer different interventions. Would like to allocate 2019 funds to this proposal to promote prevention and keep people safe. Underspent by \$40,833.
 - Alice supports the concept and thinks the Howard Center model has worked well. Alice asked how other programs like this throughout Vermont are sustained financially that are not funded by the Block Grant, such as the Howard Center and HCRS.
 - Laurie suggested that the funding come from the police department and not mental health, as mental health is already underfunded.
- Goal 20 – CRT Housing fund to be main focus. This could be opened up to Pathways. Underspent by \$12,166.
- Goal 13 – Puppets in Education - Alice would like to see a performance filmed and available online on DMH and AOE websites, or just YouTube. Alice asked if Block Grant funds could be contributed to get this filmed and shared.
- TA Funds: \$13,332 in unspent funds
 - Jessica proposed using leftover TA funds to provide trainings to DAs about how to be an affirming, educated provider for LGBTQ+ youth, which may help reduce issues such as self-harm and suicidal ideation. Outright VT has trainings that can be done virtually and can push them out quickly. This could also be used to help DAs do repair work with clients if they were ever not affirming of their identity in some way.
 - Alice supported this idea.
 - Dan asked if DAs would be able to attend these trainings
 - Michael H. believes DAs would be ready to push out virtual trainings and the subject matter is welcome at the DAs.
 - Stephanie thinks this is a great idea.
 - Dan asked how TA funds have been used so far. Jessica responded that TA funds have been used for trainings and technology. Dan would like to see data and performance outcomes related to TA funds used. Jessica will bring these outcomes to the July meeting.
 - Dan moved to spend leftover TA funds on Outright VT trainings, Alice seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

2020 Priorities

- Dan was not present at previous meeting and noted that there is not anything in the priorities related to COVID-19, and many of the priorities have not been revisited in years.
- Alice agreed that the goals have not been revisited in a while, but she is not sure if she would change it at this point.

- Dan would like to put the priorities in a SurveyMonkey and send to committee to vote on top five priorities. Christina will follow up next week by sending out SurveyMonkey for 2020 Priorities. The survey will provide a list of the priorities as it is right now and ask what additional topics the group would like to see added.
- Laurie asked how children's respite is being addressed during COVID-19. Jessica responded that tele-respite is being provided, as well as paying for services not paid for under Medicaid, such as gym passes, equine therapy, etc.

2019 Outcomes

- The Planning Council reviewed the 2019 Outcomes document.
- Dan shared that he feels most of the outcome descriptions are inadequate or non-existent. Alice agreed with Dan and noted these are performance measures, not outcome measures. Alice and Dan would like to ask for something more specific for next year's report. Jessica let the group know that the more specific they can be with their requests, the more successful we will be at following up on what they are looking for. Dan and Alice agreed the outcomes document is a vast improvement to what they used to receive. Alice noted she likes to see trends and directions we are headed in.
- Goal 1- NFI Initiative
 - Dan would like to see the raw numbers, not percentages of the goal accomplishments to understand the impact.
 - Michael H. asked what is at least one goal question we could post for each of these to help be more specific? Or one specific goal served per question.
 - Stephanie asked if the percentages are what has been accomplished.
 - Jessica made a note to add the number in addition to the percentage to the goal accomplishments.
- Goal 2 – Respite
 - The group would like to see the raw numbers and percentage.
- Goal 3 – Grants to CRT programs at DAs
 - The group noted it would be helpful to see the number served in the program to know if it is going up or down through the years.
 - Jessica noted Vermont is seeing a decrease in people enrolled in CRT programs because Vermont is an aging state.
 - Michael noted that we tend to see in CRT mostly people who don't have support and people with the most severe symptomology. Many services are available in outpatient now and people don't have to be in CRT to access case management.
- Goal 4- CRT Grant – Co-occurring Funding
 - Dan noted there is no outcome data provided.
 - Michael suggested that the numbers may have been too small to be impactful.
- Goal 5 – Emergency Services
 - Dan asked a clarifying question about support lines- referring to DA support lines. Dan asked how people feel about having multiple support lines available and if it is redundant.
 - Members agreed that it is good for people to have options if they want to speak with a peer or mental health professional.
 - Anne added that having multiple options offers a different lens and that they complement each other.
 - Jessica added a note to add previous years to be able to compare averages.

- Goal 6- Housing Infrastructure Funds
 - Alice appreciated the breakout of the funds.
 - Dan would like to see the breakout by funds and years.
- Goal 7 – Street Outreach
 - Alice asked if Washington County will be on track for Sept. 30th to hire for the position.
 - Jessica responded that they already have the position listed to hire.
 - The group would like to see more past outcomes data from the Howard Center.
- Goal 8 – Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (VPS) - Operating Expenses
 - Dan noted there is no outcome data.
 - Alice asked for performance measures.
 - Dan would like to know how many printed newspapers go out quarterly and how many people were served.
- Goal 9 – VPS – Peer Operated Initiatives
 - Alice would like to know how much money went into each group and how many placements were supported.
 - Dan would like to see performance and outcome data.
 - Jessica noted that we may not be able to get this level of detail, but she will check on it.
- Goal 10 - 10% Set Aside for First Episode Psychosis
 - Dan would like to see a summary of survey responses.
 - Alice would like to know how many total recipients attended.
- Goal 11 – Pathways – Vermont Support Line
 - The group would like to see historical data.
 - Dan would like to see info regarding RFP
- The group was over time and decided to finish looking at the outcomes at the July meeting.

Adjournment:

Dan moved to adjourn; Alice seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm.

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Call-in Number: 1 (802) 552-8456

Meeting Code: 370001718#

Next Meeting: July 31, 2020, 1:00-3:00 PM

Location TBD